



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The final draft of the National Youth Policy of the Commonwealth of Dominica was accepted by Cabinet on August 28, 2003. The policy was tabled and debated in Parliament on May 27, 2004, and was adopted on the same day.

The process leading to the adoption of the National Youth Policy involved over four years of planning and consultancy. The process got on stream with the installation of the Youth Policy Task Force in December 1998, followed by a series of national consultations from 1999 to 2002.

This project involved a research on the implementation of the National Youth Policy of Dominica since its adoption some three years ago. The research involved perusing the policy document, keeping discussions with management of the implementing agency as well as with the National Youth Council on the impact of the policy on its target group. Relevant data on Dominican youth were collected from the Social Indicators and Millennium Development Goals (SIMDG) of the Central Statistical Office.

The report presented data and demographic trends from 1998 to 2003 on the youth population age 15 to 30 years. The data on youth employment, socio economy, education, health, and crime raised serious concern about the impact of the policy on the youth. It was also discovered that the policy has not been reviewed since its adoption and that the monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the policy had not been materialised.

On the basis of the research findings, and legitimate literature on policy analysis, the project has recommended that a Research and Planning Unit be instituted within the implementing agency, the Youth Development Division in the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs. The Unit will collect and analyse critical data on youth related issues and report findings to a Youth Commission which is to be installed to monitor the implementation of the policy and make major decisions geared towards improving the effectiveness of the policy (see appendix II).

## **BACKGROUND**

Dominican youth, like other countries' youth are not free from the global problems of unemployment, underemployment, drugs, crime and violence. These are in no way isolated from the other related social factors such as education, health, recreation and opportunities for enterprise development. Prior to the National Youth Policy very little had been done to adequately address youth related issues, mainly because youth as a concept in Dominica was still a relatively new and emerging social consortium. As a result very little youth services existed. *“During slavery the concept of youth did not exist. The youth was an adult and the adult was a youth until death or incapacity due to arduous physical labour”* (Danns, et al. 1997:13).

In the 1930's provision for compulsory education was established because literacy and civics were seen as major issues to be tackled. Church-assisted groups provided other services to the youth through philanthropy. The Girls Guide and Boys Scout Movement emerged as a medium to provide these services. Systematic initiatives to address youth problems came in 1945 with the establishment of a Social Welfare Department within the public sector. This was part of the broader response to the social situation in Caribbean society as contained in the Moyne Commission which was set up to inquire into the social and economic conditions of the region during the latter part of the 1930's.

In the interim, services to youth increased; a Youth Camp site was established at Londonderry by the government, providing young people with a facility through which various entry level skills were acquired. Through the Dominica Cadet Corp other social development goals were established in discipline, leadership and moral development. However, there was an absence of collaboration and coordination among the agencies offering these services. It was this concern, among others, which led to the establishment of the National Youth Council in 1970. A National Youth Council alone could not and did not bring about the desired levels of coordination. In 1972, in response to these concerns, and based on the recommendations of the Vin Lawrence Report, a Youth Development Division was established within the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The pace of social development initiatives quickened during the 1970's in response to the changing social and economic tone of the region. Black ideology and consciousness, and a "New West Indian" way of thinking emerged, as Britain's pre-occupation of the English-speaking Island States faded away. The independence movement took on a new dimension and Dominica attained political independence on November 3, 1978.

By the 1980's, despite the organizational and institutional changes, it was clear according to the West Indian Commission, "*The region's youth felt powerless in a world dominated by adults*" (Time for Action, 1992). With the reduction in adult suffrage from twenty-one to eighteen years, a number of political youth organizations emerged, as the right to vote presented the opportunity for youth to elect those who best represented their interest.

Youth unemployment and adult reproductive health were the two major concerns for youth work in the 1980's. In response, the government initiated a non-formal youth skills training programme to assist in job creation. Youth centres were established in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, to attempt to address problems of sexual and reproductive health. Youth volunteerism gained prominence, and the interest in youth work grew.

The idea of a National Youth Policy (NYP) began with the Vin Lawrence Report, "*Youth work in Dominica should supplement the effort of schools and formal training to prepare young people for their life as adults. It should prepare them for future responsibilities of parenthood and family life; enable them to be intelligent consumers and assure their active participation in creating the culture of tomorrow.*" The report underscored various youth services such as education, training, culture, health, employment, sports and recreation which must be incorporated into meaningful national programmes, intended for the provision of necessary training and opportunities for the total development of each youth. The report cited special groups such as the out of school, unemployed and underemployed, young women, urban and rural youth, youth with disabilities, and uneducated youth which must be catered for in the National Youth Policy.

The urgent need to intensify the efforts to providing such youth services in a more integrated approach led to the installation of a Youth Policy Task Force in December 1998 which organized a series of national consultations from 1999 to 2002 on the development of a National Youth Policy. Six district consultations were held with various stakeholders through out the length and breadth of Dominica. These included the National Youth Council, Youth Workers, Youth Leaders, Political Organizations, Religious Groups, Sports Clubs, the Private Sector, Women's Groups, Special Needs Associations, Parliamentarians, the Chamber of Commerce, and Education and Health Personnel. Over six hundred young men and women participated in the consultations. The Commonwealth Youth Programme – Caribbean Centre provided part funding and expertise for these consultations, as well as in the formulation of the draft policy.

The process of documentation brought the Youth Policy Task Force to the critical stage of research and data collection. Additional data and information were obtained from published sources, such as the Central Statistical Office. On August 28, 2003, the final draft was accepted by Cabinet. The National Youth Policy was tabled in Parliament on May 27, 2004 by Honourable Vince Henderson, Minister of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs. The policy debate and adoption also took place on May 27, 2004.

## **PURPOSE**

Today, unemployment and problems of sexual health still remain major issues and more so, since the onset of HIV/AIDS in the latter part of the 1980's. This is compounded with problems of drug abuse and the shift in traditional values among youth, influenced by the revolution in technology and the problems of globalisation.

This project seeks to determine at what stage of implementation is the National Youth Policy of Dominica since its adoption some three years ago, and to determine the extent to which the policy is meeting desired outcomes given the additional influences of information technology and globalisation.

The project also intends to examine possible strategies which are aimed at providing some direction to the implementing agency, the Youth Development Division, in order to more effectively monitor the policy.

## **PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION**

The thirty-one-page National Youth Policy document identified two monitoring entities which are critical for the efficient implementation of the policy. Upon discussions with the Chief Youth Development Officer, and the President of the National Youth Council, these critical areas were identified to be lacking within the policy implementation process;

- I. That a Research and Planning Unit with appropriately trained personnel as intended in the policy has not been instituted, thus monitoring and evaluation remains the single most difficult challenge for the department.
  
- II. That the Youth Policy Task Force, as stipulated in the policy document, which was supposed to be transformed into a Youth Commission to evaluate the implementation of the policy had not been established. Following the adoption of the policy in Parliament, the task force became dormant.

The implementing agency, the Youth Development Division, which is a department within the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs, has been functioning with basically the same resources and in the same way as prior to the adoption of the National Youth Policy (see appendix I). This therefore makes it difficult for the department to implement certain programmes of the policy.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to William Dunn, Author of the Third Edition on PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS; *“Monitoring produces designative claims during and after policies have been adopted and implemented, that is ex post facto. By contrast, forecasting seeks to establish factual premises in advance of action, that is, ex ante. When information about policy actions is transformed through monitoring into information about policy outcomes, we experience problem situations.”*

The excerpt above emphasizes the essential methodological role that monitoring plays in policy analysis. The problems which are being addressed in this project are as a result of two very important monitoring entities which are lacking in the implementation of the policy. The Research and Planning Unit is meant to provide relevant data and information which will assist the Youth Commission in its policy evaluation and decision making.

William Dunn also noted that *“Equally important, information about policy outcomes is transformed through evaluation into information about policy performance. Monitoring performs at least four major functions in policy analysis: Explanation, Accounting, Auditing, and Compliance.”*

Regarding the National Youth Policy, the Research and Planning Unit is expected to perform the explanatory and accounting functions to answer the ‘why’ questions which are critical to the performance of the policy. On the basis of the information presented by the Unit, the Youth Commission performs the auditing and compliance functions by determining whether the resources are reaching the intended target groups and to what extent. For example, how can the policy address the increasing rate of unemployment among the youth through the opportunities presented by the revolution in technology?

Policy Analysis always presents choices. Decision making can be more effective through a process of reasoning which would involve defining the problem, comparing consequences of two or more alternatives and choosing the alternative which is likely to produce the preferred outcome.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The thirty-one page National Youth Policy of the Commonwealth of Dominica which was adopted in Parliament in 2004 was perused, and observations made on specific components which appeared to be inadequately addressed in the implementation. Discussions were held with the Chief Youth Development Officer who is the head of the implementing agency of the National Youth Policy. The discussions focused on the performance of the policy and the areas affecting its implementation.

The National Youth Council (NYC) which is the umbrella and lobbying body for all youth organizations in Dominica played a critical role in the development of the National Youth Policy. Discussions were held with the President of the National Youth Council on the overall performance of the policy and the need for a review.

Relevant data on Dominican youth were recorded from the Social Indicators and Millennium Development Goals (SIMDG), a national report of the Central Statistical Office. Observations were made on demographic trends in population, employment, education, health, economy and crime in an effort to obtain new information to compare with the old in order to monitor the direction and pace of social change.

With the data and information collected from these sources, reference was made to theory on policy analysis by William Dunn in the Third Edition of PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS. The analysis on the monitoring of the National Youth Policy also took into consideration Dominica's peculiar situation in relation to socio economic factors, resources, and culture.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***Definition of a Dominican Youth***

The National Youth Policy targets young people fifteen to thirty (15-30) years, but recognizing the various definitions of young people that have already been legislated. The policy recognizes that the period between childhood and adulthood varies from individual to individual and is affected by the norms of a particular society. It recognizes that not all young people are the same; some are at school, others are at work and still others may be unemployed while some may be parents. It recognizes the fact that some young people are challenged with a variety of disabilities and with illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. It recognizes too that age limits will not incorporate all the characteristics that define a young person.

The policy is conscious of the cultural and value system that governs the outlook of young caribs and that these are different from those of non-carib people. The policy subscribes to the gender difference that exists among young people. It is also aware that the challenges which confront urban and rural youth may be similar but the resources available to both groups are not. The unemployed, the young women, the disabled, HIV/AIDS victims, and the carib youth are considered as special target groups under the policy.

### ***Demographic Trends***

#### *(Socio economy)*

According to the Central Statistical Office's national report of the Social Indicators and Millennium Development Goals (SIMDG), the 2002 Country Poverty Assessment data indicated that the poverty line was estimated at EC\$3,400.00 per adult per annum and the indigent line estimated at EC\$2,010.00 per annum. The poverty rate at the household level was 29% and the indigent population was 11%. Household figures for 2001 totalled twenty thousand and three hundred and fifty-nine (22,359). Fifteen per cent (15%) of the households were headed by young people.

*(Population)*

The 2003 national population stood at seventy thousand and three hundred and forty (70,340). The youth population made up 31.3% or 22,005 of the national population. Young women made up 49% or 10,803 of the youth population while young men accounted for 51% or 11,202. Over sixty per cent (60.4%) or 42,490 of the Dominican populace are under 31 years.

*(Employment & Education)*

The labour force decreased from 33,228 in 1999, to 27,865 in 2001. The youth labour force decreased from 14,901 in 1999 to 12,617 in 2001, accounting for 42.63% or 2,284 of the decreased labour force. Figures for 2001 indicated that over 50% of the unemployed labour force had no occupational training and about 13% of the young people were illiterate. Since the youth accounts for 45.3% of the labour force it means a large number of young people particularly those in the rural areas were unemployed or underemployed. Unemployment among the youth labour force currently stands at 16.4%, while about 16% of the youth population (15-30 years) are attending school.

*(Health)*

A report by the Health Promotion and Resource Centre in the Ministry of Health indicated a significant increase of confirmed HIV/AIDS cases among the 15-30 years; from forty-nine (49) cases in 1998 to one hundred and seventeen (117) in 2002. The total cases recorded in 1998 were one hundred and nineteen (119), and two hundred and sixty-two (262) in 2002. The affected youth accounted for 41.2% of the cases in 1998 and 44.7% in 2002.

*(Crime)*

A report from the Dominica State Prisons showed an increase in the prison population from seven hundred and twenty-eight (728) in 1998 to eight hundred and forty-two (842) in 2003. The youth population makes up a significant seventy-three per cent (73%) of the prison population.

## **ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

William Dunn underscored that, *“Our success in obtaining, analyzing and interpreting data on policy outcomes depends on our capacity to construct reliable and valid measures. One way to construct measures is to specify the variables we are interested in monitoring.”*

The data presented in this project provide some very pertinent indicators which should have been first hand information readily available to the agency responsible for the implementation of the National Youth Policy. This is information that the Youth Development Division needs in order to perform its policy monitoring functions of explaining, accounting, auditing and compliance. What are these indicators telling us about the situations and circumstances that the Dominican youth are faced with and to what extent is the policy addressing these situations?

In a country where the youth accounts for 31.3% of the total population and makes up 45.3% of the labour force, it is evident, that group has the potential to impact significantly on the social and economic development of the country. If opportunities are provided to harness the potential of the youth, the positive outcomes can be tremendous; while failure to do so can produce negative results.

The figures reported by the Health Promotion and Resource Centre, and the Dominica State Prisons don't portray a good image of the social practices among the young people of Dominica. Dominica is considered as an under populated country and is increasingly being threatened by the vast migration to the USA, particularly among the youth. With these alarming figures of HIV/AIDS cases and the prison population, it means that the labour force is adversely affected and consequently put a strain on the national economy.

The rate of illiteracy among the youth, particularly among the young men is a concern, especially with the revolution in technology and the advent of globalization which require certain levels of literacy in order to take advantage of the opportunities they present. This is exacerbated by the high number of untrained and unskilled youth and a relatively high

unemployment rate. The youth head three thousand and three hundred and fifty-four (3,354) of Dominica's households where the poverty and the indigent population rates at the household level are 29% and 11% respectively. That means that almost six thousand and five hundred (6,500) households are living below the poverty line and almost two thousand and five hundred (2,500) are indigent. These households are not able to meet the daily basic dietary requirements. With all these indicators, one can imagine the challenges that the Dominican youth are confronted with, among others.

Policies attain some significant level of performance when policy outcomes contribute to goals and objectives. The vision which is articulated in the National Youth Policy seeks to recognize the roles, rights and responsibilities of the youth and to ensure their holistic development through a process of involvement and empowerment. The National Youth Policy's mission is to create a framework that ensures that young men and women in Dominica grow up with a sense of belonging and worth and are empowered to participate fully in the social and economic development of the nation.

The vision and mission statements of the National Youth Policy of Dominica are well articulated in the policy document but the implementation of the policy has left much to be desired. The proverb "*A stitch in time saves nine*" came to mind, having discovered the alarming data about the Dominican youth. It is fair to believe that earlier intervention would have produced better outcomes. The intervention could have been timely if the Research and Planning Unit had been operational and if the Youth Commission had been established to perform policy monitoring functions of auditing and compliance within the framework.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

William Dunn highlighted that, *“In making policy recommendations, the analyst typically addresses a number of interrelated questions; whose needs, values, and opportunities are at issue, and what alternatives are available for their satisfaction? What goals and objectives should be attained, and how should they be measured? How much will it cost to attain objectives and what kinds of constraints; budgetary, legal, administrative or political may impede their attainment?”* It is with these considerations in mind that the following recommendations are made towards improving the monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Dominica.

The Youth Development Division requires both human and financial resources in order to execute its programmes as mandated by the policy. Human resource also takes into account the capacity to collect, interpret and analyse data that can inform the implementing agency on its programmes and the outcomes of these programmes. The Division has been operating without that resource. In light of the alarming data on the youth situation, a strong recommendation is made for a full time Social Analyst to be attached to the Division and operate within a Research and Planning Unit, effective the beginning of the 2008/2009 fiscal year on July 1, 2008. The Social Analyst will perform the explanatory and accounting functions in the policy monitoring process.

The Social Analyst shall network with institutions such as the Central Statistical Office, the Health Promotion and Resource Centre, the State Prisons, the National Drug Prevention Unit, the Police and Immigration Department, the Welfare Division, the Child Abuse Prevention Unit, the National Children’s Home, the Christian Children Fund, the Operation Youth Quake, the Association of Disabled People, and other appropriate institutions with information pertinent to the youth. A comprehensive database on the youth should be developed in collaboration with the various institutions in the network. This database should be updated on a regular basis by the Social Analyst, and interesting trends and demographic patterns should be recorded and reported periodically. The Social Analyst should conduct periodic awareness and training sessions with the District Youth Officers on trends specific to their respective districts.

Having put the explanatory and accounting functions of the policy monitoring process in place, it is therefore advisable to establish the mechanism to perform the auditing and compliance functions. The establishment of a five-man Youth Commission should also be installed on July 1, 2008. The Youth Commission shall be appointed by the Youth Affairs Minister, and will function on a voluntary basis, with an annual honorarium or stipend from the Government. The Commission shall meet periodically to evaluate reports from the Social Analyst.

The President of the National Youth Council (NYC) shall serve as chairman of the Youth Commission. Four other persons on the Commission shall include the Chief Youth Development Officer, the Social Analyst, a representative of the private sector and a certified Social Worker. The composition of the Youth Commission must take into account the types of decisions needed to produce the desired outcomes and improvements in the programmes of the policy. The data and information from the Social Analyst must be the basis on which the Commission makes its decisions, and should be evident in the quality of the Commission's final decisions.

Considering the Division's budgetary constraints, the Research and Planning Unit should include only the Social Analyst in the interim. An additional forty-eight thousand dollars (EC\$48,000.00) should be allocated for salaries and allowances per annum; and five thousand dollars (EC\$5,000.00) for a new computer and office supplies. Secretarial services and staff support should be provided from among the current resources. Office space and overhead expenses should be absorbed by the Division as sufficient space is available within its existing office facility. At least twenty thousand dollars (EC\$20,000.00) should be allocated in the Youth Development Division's annual budget for the activities of the Youth Commission.

With these two important policy monitoring entities installed and functioning effectively, it is expected that timely intervention can be manifested in the implementation of the National Youth Policy and produce desired outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The National Youth Policy was designed with a core of principles and values which influenced the design and focus of the policy and which was meant to guide its implementation. These principles and values focused on *Sustainable Development; Youth Participation; Youth Driven; Cultural Diversity; Gender Sensitivity; and Empowering Environment*. Three years after the adoption of the policy, one wanders what has happened to these principles and values, or what now guides the policy, given the alarming statistics revealed on Dominican youth through this research.

During discussions with the Chief Youth Development Officer and the President of the National Youth Council, it was agreed that the situation requires urgent intervention and that a review of the policy was necessary at this stage. The establishment of the Research and Planning Unit, and the Youth Commission will be among the Division's proposals for Cabinet's consideration for the next fiscal year.

Upon establishment, the Youth Commission in collaboration with the Research and Planning Unit need to revisit the principles and values of the policy and do a general evaluation to determine how these principles and values have impacted on the unemployed, the young women, the disabled, HIV/AIDS victims, and the carib youth who were considered as special target groups in the policy.

The policy must be perceived by the youth as a sense of hope. It must make them feel there is something in it for them and that the future will bring about their aspirations. A well executed policy for the youth of a nation is like laying a solid foundation to sustain a major structure. The prosperity of a country and its quality of life is determined by how it nurtures its young generation.

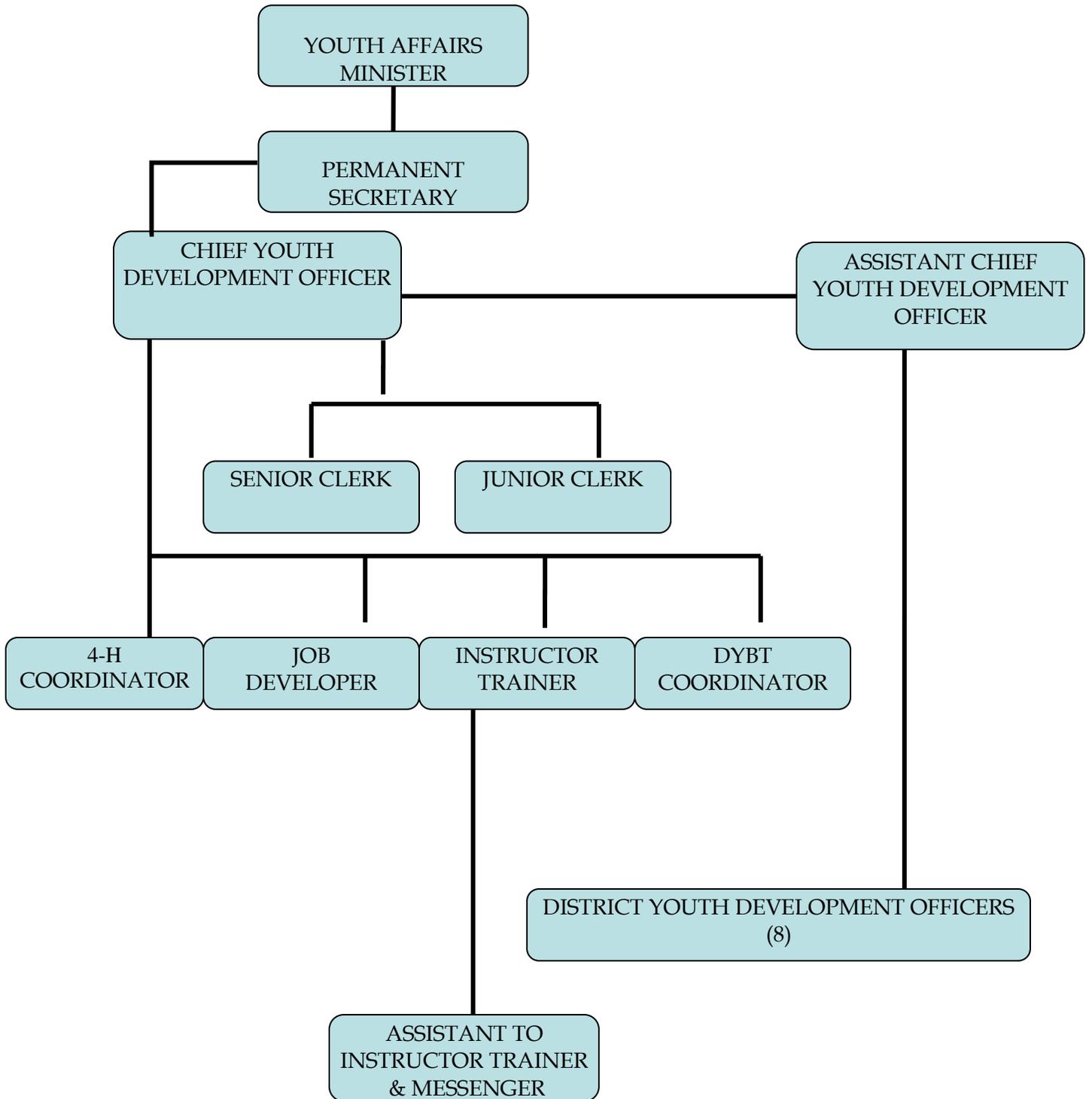
In order for the National Youth Policy to have significant impact on the lives of Dominican youth, an effective monitoring mechanism must be instituted. The proposed Youth Commission and the Research and Planning Unit present an ideal opportunity.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- I. Excerpts on policy analysis theory were quoted from William N. Dunn, Author of the Third Edition on PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS.  
Reference pages: 217-218; 231; 277-278; 280; 282-286; 356-358; 430; 440.
  
- II. The National Youth Policy of the Commonwealth of Dominica was obtained from the Youth Development Division in the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs.
  
- III. Statistics on Dominican youth were obtained from the SOCIAL INDICATORS AND MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SIMDG) of the Central Statistical Office in the Ministry of Finance and Planning of the Commonwealth of Dominica.
  
- IV. Discussions were held with Mr. Jules Pascal the Chief Youth Development Officer in the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs.
  
- V. Discussions were held with Mr. Kelder Darroux the President of the National Youth Council (NYC).

**APPENDIX I**

**CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



**APPENDIX II**

**PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

